

The Shropshire Shuffle: The Sound of Faith and Science in *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture*

Everybody's Gone to the Rapture (2015) explores faith, technology, community, and the fabric of reality in the bucolic town of Shropshire. The ambiguity between science and religion drives the story – is what happened a technological marvel or a divine miracle, and does it make a difference? In this presentation, I examine the role of sound, technology, and voice in *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture*. The soundtrack and soundscape Jessica Curry composes not only establish the rustic character of the town and reflect plot points, but also weigh in on the faith/science rift. To accomplish these tasks, Curry uses several of the same techniques as Mravunac did in the score for *The Talos Principle* (2013). These techniques include assigning instrumental and electronic timbral motifs, glitch noise, and diegetic and non-diegetic instances of the human voice. First, Curry uses traditional instruments to establish the character of Shropshire. Second, the glowing orb that guides the player emits a glitching sound, giving it an other-worldly feel, at times electric and other times angelic. Third, the people themselves exist as voices inside the electrical currents and are electronically distorted. There are two instances of 'clean' voices worth noting. The first is in the non-diegetic hymns of a church choir, singing alongside the instruments. The second is when the glowing orb reveals traces of citizens' conversations before being raptured. These scenes are the clearest their voices sound in the game, and also uniquely combine the three techniques to convey the clearest messages.